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THE CLOSE OF THE LIVES OF EMINENT UNITARIANS:

THE LATE MR. ASPLAND.

IT has been sometimes remarked by those who are not fully acquainted with the principles and doctrines of Unitarianism, that it is a system which may do to live by, but which will be found insufficient and unavailing in the hour of death. Experience, however, has repeatedly demonstrated the erroneousness of such an idea; an experience founded on the recorded deaths of many eminent Unitarians, as well as on those to which no remarkable publicity has been given. In general, it must be confessed, Unitarians do not judge of the character of men so much from their dying state—from a few words uttered by them when disease has enfeebled their mental and bodily frames, as from their remarks in those days when their intellects were vigorous, and their physical constitutions in a sound and healthy state. They gather the future state of the individual, not so much from any momentary piety, as from the general tenor of the conduct and conversation. We intend, however, in the present paper, to submit to the attention of the candid reader, some account of the closing lives and "dying expressions" of a few remarkable men, who have made their earthly exit, firm in the Unitarian faith; and to conclude with some observations on the literary and pastoral character of a distinguished member of the Unitarian body, whose loss we have had to deplore since the issuing of our first number—we allude to the late lamented Mr. Aspland.

But, first, inasmuch as Christians of this denomination look upon death in a light in some respects different from that in which it is usually regarded by those who style

themselves orthodox, it may be as well to preface our proposed statements by a few remarks and suggestions on this important topic.

There is no one, perhaps, professing Christianity, but would allow, in words at least, that it was designed to introduce into the world new views and feelings concerning death; and yet, how few are there on whom this conviction seems to have visibly and effectually operated! How many are there by whom the termination of the present life is considered practically as the great calamity of human existence! The great mass of mankind do not yet participate in the cheerfulness, tranquillity, and triumph of Him who "has abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

Assuredly this must mainly arise from a want of real, living, vital faith in the blessed promises of the Saviour. The general treatment indeed of the subject of death is scarcely in agreement with the spirit of the Christian religion. Reflections on this event, a dread of it, and a fearful activity thus awakened, constitute, with many, a principal part of the sum and evidence of their piety. But surely this is not the great object of religion; rather is it to prepare us for that world of spirits into which the gate of death is but the entrance. It may be safely said, that he who looks upon death as the greatest of calamities has not yet learned Christianity. Sin is worse, and to a good man there are many things in life that are more calamitous than death, which is the great course of nature, the wise and good appointment of God, that should be met with pious submission, calmness, and trust. And so it will be, if we thoroughly believe in Him who has destroyed "the power of death;" who came to deliver us from the bondage of this fear that weighs so heavily upon the consciences of men, and who has unfolded to us the bright and exalting hope of an endless and blessed life.

The dread of this event has manifested, and still manifests itself in various ways. By many, if not the body of mankind, death is still regarded as "the king of terrors," clothed with every terrific attribute. And probably the great poetical work of Milton may have contributed something to the support and countenance of this common feeling. But this, and some other popular

phraseologies applied to the last hour of mortal existence, will not, we are convinced, impose upon reflecting minds, who will agree with Dr. Dewey, that death, taking it in its natural and general course, "is the gradual extinction of our faculties, the sinking away of the powers of animal life, till they finally cease to act and to be. Now, this process may be hastened or retarded; may have its progress and its different stages; one power after another may yield: the faculty of speech, of hearing, of motion; but to fix on one particular moment rather than another, and to say that *now* the deceased person is 'struck with death,' is to use language without any foundation in philosophy, or support from observation. There *is* no power; there may be precursors, indeed, which the experienced may descry with greater or less certainty; but there is no power, that, at any one moment, strikes a fatal blow; that fastens a hold upon its victim from which it may not be shaken; that sets its mark upon the diseased frame, as it were the mark of destiny: but 'while there is life there is hope,' and from any state of exhaustion the sinking faculties may rise to a briefer or longer continuance of life. It is not, in fine, by some mysterious harbinger, that death announces its coming. All decay is but dying; all disease is a progress towards death; every beating pulse is wearing away the channels of life; every breath of that heaving bosom is preparing for the time when it shall breathe no more.

"It is thought that this final event passes with some dreadful visitation of unknown agony over the departing sufferer. It is imagined that there is some strange and mysterious reluctance in the spirit to leave the body: that it struggles long to retain its hold, and is, at last, torn with violence from its mortal tenement; and, in fine, that this conflict between the soul and the body, greatly adds to the pangs of dissolution. But it may be justly presumed, from what usually appears, that there is no particular nor acute suffering; not more than is often experienced in life; nay, rather, that there is less, because the very powers of suffering are enfeebled, the very capacities of pain are nearly exhausted. Death is to be regarded rather as a sleep than an acute sensation—as a suspension rather than a conflict of our faculties. Our Saviour once said, in relation to this event, 'Our friend

Lazarus sleepeth.' The martyr Stephen, we are told, 'fell asleep,' though he died amidst the blows and shouts of murderers. And the Scriptures denominate the pious dead, 'those who sleep in Jesus.' Death is the sleep of the weary. It is repose, the body's repose, after the busy and toilsome day of life."

But is this the general conviction—the general feeling even in a Christian land? We apprehend, we may say, far from it. And yet our Saviour says, "He that liveth and believeth in me shall never die;" and adds, "believest thou this?" Do Christians of the present day believe it? Notwithstanding what our theology teaches us, it would seem that the impression on most minds is, that death is the severance of all the ties that bound us to our former existence; that by it a transformation takes place not only of our state but of our nature; that the spirit, in departing hence, in winging its way from "this visible, diurnal sphere," was parting with all that was most valuable and cherishable here below. That this, however, is an error, has been satisfactorily proved (as far at least as proof can be made available from Scripture) by many Unitarian writers. We have not space to dwell on this point, and, therefore must refer the inquiring reader to those able authors who have published their views on this interesting subject. It may be sufficient to observe, that the evils of making this wide distinction, this violent disruption of the present from the future life are not few, nor unimportant, inasmuch as Jesus Christ has instructed us that what we witness is the death of the corporeal part only; that the good man, the spirit of goodness which is in him, the intrinsic and intellectual being, "shall never die." Our departure from the land of the living, simply considered, is not to be looked upon as an ordination of the wrath of God, as we are sometimes told, but rather of his infinite goodness; for that which is inevitable, must be regarded as of beneficent appointment. Besides, this departure results from the very nature and necessity of things. Our frames are not adapted or formed for perennial residence "in this terrene abode;" nor could the earth support the accumulating generations of mankind. Moreover, the mind of man itself would not be able to sustain the burden of perpetual duration in the present sphere of existence;

ere long it would desire to be released and to be at rest. "It would ask for other scenes, for other regions, for other sources of knowledge, for other fountains of joy."

Still, it cannot for a moment be denied that the hour of mortality is a solemn and a serious hour, for "after death is the judgment; that is, a trial of conscience in the presence of the Most High—a time of retribution, when every evil propensity, every unwarrantable gratification, every unjust deed shall be laid bare, and become a piercing arrow of conviction; in other words, when passion, indulgence, and sin shall give place to the manifested and no longer mistaken judgment of Heaven. And, to carry out this view of the solemn responsibilities of the soul, in the words of the above eminent writer, "every future moment—not that of death only, nor that of the judgment which is immediately to follow, but every future moment of our being is to answer for every present moment." This great law of retribution belongs to our moral nature, and is not only applicable to the future, but likewise to the present life; to the former, however, it is made to apply with greater intensity and clearness. "It is not death, then, that we should fear, but the eternal retribution of conscience. It is not at the moment of death that we should tremble, but at every moment of the future that is to answer for the neglects, and errors, and offences of the mis-spent past."

Such being the view which we take of death, it will be imagined with what cordiality we subscribe to the following remarks of the Rev. Dr. Dewey :—

"We must venture to question the propriety of much that often passes around the beds of the dying. The last scene should be as far as possible calm and quiet. The infirmity of human nature, the agonies of friendship in such an hour, we would speak of with indulgence; but it should be remembered, that it is our duty, as far as possible, by our resignation and fortitude, to sustain the sufferer, that we should not add to the last solemn trial of the sinking spirit the disturbing influence of violent agitation or clamorous grief. He who walks with his friend down that valley of shadows, has need to do it with a sustained demeanour—with a calm aspect, with a firm step, with a sympathy full of all human gentleness, with a purity full of divine and immortal hope. Above all,

religion should not come to the scene of a death-bed, to urge, as a matter of course, its questions or its formalities. Let it speak its holy words, or rest in its holy silence of faith and prayer; but the dying hour is no time for intricate casuistry. Friendship may, indeed, whisper its anxious inquiry, but formality should speak nothing. Abstruse questions of faith, or of experience, should not then be agitated; still less should there be such stress laid, as with surprising frequency is done, upon the question, whether the dying man is 'willing to die.' No inquiry could be more unsatisfactory as a test of character; and, indeed, it avails nothing but to spread among the living the false impression, that a preparation for another life is a willingness, when it is unavoidable, to leave this. To hear, as we have sometimes heard, loud and agonising voices of prayer, that startled and shocked into temporary consciousness the sinking and bewildered senses of an expiring mortal, has struck us with a horror that overcame our awe even at death, and seemed to turn the solemnities of dissolution into sacrilegious disorder and confusion. So would we not have our own departure marked; but we would that stillness—where all pray in silence, where the affections of the spirit only move in the hushed atmosphere of death, where the soul breathes its utterable thoughts—that stillness should settle down upon that last scene which is to usher us into the world of spirits!"

Having offered these preliminary remarks, we now proceed to give some account of the latter end of several eminent Unitarians. Mr. Cooper, in his "Memoirs of the Life of Dr. Priestley," observes that on Sunday, the day before he died, "He desired me to read to him the 11th chapter of John. I was going to read to the end of the chapter, but he stopped me at the 45th verse.* He dwelt for some time on the advantages he had derived from reading the Scriptures daily, and advised me to do the same: saying, that it would prove to me as it had done to him, a source of the purest pleasure. He desired me to reach him a pamphlet which was at his bed's head —'Simpson on the Duration of Future Punishment.'

* This verse closes the record of the signal transaction at the grave of Lazarus—and the interesting inferences a Christian would draw from it.

'It will be a source of satisfaction to you to read that pamphlet,' said he, giving it to me; 'it contains my sentiments, and a belief in them will be a support to you in the most trying circumstances, as it has been to me. We shall all meet finally; we only require different degrees of discipline, suited to our different tempers, to prepare us for final happiness.' Upon Mr. ——— coming into his room, he said, 'You see, Sir, I am still living.' Mr. ——— observed, he would always live. 'Yes,' said he, '*I believe I shall, and we shall all meet again in another and in a better world.*' He said this with great animation, laying hold of Mr. ———'s hand in both his. At prayers he had all the children brought to his bed-side as before. After prayers they wished him a good night, and were leaving the room; he desired them to stay, and spoke to them each separately. He exhorted them all to continue to love each other. 'I am going to sleep,' said he, 'as well as you, for death is only a good long sound sleep in the grave; and we shall meet again.' He congratulated us on the dispositions of our children; said it was a satisfaction to see them likely to turn out well; and continued for some time to *express his confidence in a happy immortality, and in a future state, which would afford us ample field for the exertion of our faculties.*"

In the "Memoirs of Gilbert Wakefield," a distinguished scholar, and intrepid Unitarian Christian, we find the following remarks:—"Of the benefits derived from what is called *natural religion,* he had a much lower opinion than many have adopted. His sense of the necessity and value of *revelation* was proportionably exalted. The popular notion of a soul, and an intermediate state of conscious existence, he regarded as the fond conceits of vain philosophy. Considering death as the utter destruction of the *whole man,* his hopes of futurity depended solely on the Christian doctrine of a RESURRECTION.

The rapid progress of his disorder allowed scarcely any opportunity of expressing his views upon this subject during his last hours. In the contemplation of death, however, he was happily exempted from those gloomy apprehensions which have embittered the comfort of too many excellent persons whose theological system

> Casts round religion's orb, the mists of fear,
> Or shades with horrors, what with smiles should glow.

In the sentiments which Mr. Wakefield had embraced, he saw nothing to dismay, but much to console and elevate his mind. The following is the conclusion of his *will*, made during an indisposition in Dorchester gaol: "I wish to be buried with as little expense and ceremony as is consistent with decorum, and a regard to general opinion; and hope that my family and friends will not lament my death, which is a motive of joy, and not of grief, *under an expectation of immortality by the Christian covenant*, but rather profit by their fond remembrance of me in avoiding my faults, and imitating my virtues. I come quickly, and my reward is with me; even so come Lord Jesus."

It is obvious from this extract that death, illuminated as it was to the view of Gilbert Wakefield, by the hope of immortality with which he believed he should be invested at the RESURRECTION, was an object to him not of terror but of joy. And, as he paid but little attention to *natural* religion, it is fair to conclude that his hopes arose entirely from the *influence of Christian truth* upon his mind.

Next to the name of Gilbert Wakefield (whose autobiography, if the reader has never perused, he would do well to consult), who sacrificed at the altar of truth all his views of earthly interest, may properly be placed that of Theophilus Lindsey, who resigned "a valuable benefice, a favourite residence, and a highly useful situation; and unpatronised, unbefriended by man, committed himself to God, for whose undivided glory he was devoutly jealous." Of this hero in the cause of Unitarian Christianity, the late Mr. Belsham observes, that "his last work, 'Conversations on the Divine Government, showing that everything is from God, and for Good, to all,' was published when its venerable author was upon the verge of *fourscore*. It contains his last thoughts upon many subjects of great moment; and it seems to have been intended by him as his final testimony to those great and interesting truths, which, having long been the object of his faith, the theme of his discourse, and the principle of his conduct, *he now felt to be the surest and best foundation of his consolation and his hope*. The reading of the New Testament (in the Improved Version), was the only reading which interested him for many of

the latest weeks of his life; and the very evening before he was confined to that bed of sickness, from which he rose no more—but a very few days previous to the final dissolution of his feeble frame—he desired to hear, and was pleased and gratified in attending to some portions of the New Testament, which were read to him by a friend. Such was the virtuous and honourable tenor, and such the peaceful close of the life of this sincere and exemplary Christian, this faithful pastor, this holy and venerable confessor; whose character, by the unanimous suffrage of all who had the happiness of intimate access to him, is allowed to have been as free from blemish, and to have approached as near to perfection as human frailty would admit, or as that of any individual since the Apostolic age."*—*Belsham's Funeral Sermon*, pp. 41, 42, 43, 44.

Dr. Benson, another Unitarian minister, is represented by his biographer, Dr. Amory, as having impaired his constitution by a close application to study. "It is certainly a privilege," continues Dr. A., "and what a Christian would wish, to be discharged out of life, if it please God, when a person is grown unfit for enjoying himself, and being farther useful to the world; and it pleased God to grant our friend the favour of discharging him from the burden of life, by a calm and easy death, and to call him to rest and peace, just when the services and enjoyments of life were at an end with him; and though, in the latter part, his activity and enjoyments were over, there were no inward misgivings, no appearance of anything wrong within; but all remaining was comfort and hope; calmly and at leisure reflecting on the integrity of his heart, and on a life devoted to the honour of God and Christ, and to the service of mankind in their best and everlasting interests. '*I am in good hands—all will be well;*' were words he spoke to a friend just before he closed his public ministry. And but a few hours before he breathed his last, a long and intimate friend, perceiving, as he thought, some small remains of hearing and understanding, said to him, 'God will be with you, he hath said it—'I will never leave thee nor forsake

* The last part of this extract may appear to the casual reader something like exaggerated praise; but let him consult the "Life of Theophilus Lindsey," by Belsham, and, we apprehend, he will not then consider the expressions as overcharged.—[Ed.]

thee." Upon this, he lifted up his hands, and just opened his eyes, as feeling and enjoying what was said, and, then closing them, dropt into an easy slumber, and awoke no more."

Dr. Kippis, in his "Life" of the celebrated Dr. Nathaniel Lardner, author of many useful and profound works on Gospel History, &c., has not recorded any death-bed colloquies; but the satisfaction of the latter with the faith he had embraced may be inferred from his having never expressed any doubts upon the subject. If a tree is known by its fruits—and this is a position laid down by Jesus of Nazareth, who was a man approved of God—we may join with Mr. Radcliffe in saying, "This was the disciple whom Jesus loved." For, to use the words of another writer, it may be asserted with truth, that, up to the period of his death, "No writer, from the very existence of Christianity, ever conferred so essential service upon this religion, or contributed more to clear up its evidences, or elucidate its antiquities. Accordingly, there is no country where the Christian religion is professed, in which his name is not held in the greatest esteem. Every church would have been proud to boast of him as their member, and his voluminous productions have been translated into almost all the languages of Europe.

Dr. Lardner certainly possessed a very clear and sound understanding and great shrewdness of judgment. His industry in the pursuit, and perseverance in the investigation of truth, are without example. But the quality by which he was chiefly distinguished was the candour and ingenuity of his mind. He examined everything without prejudice. Seated, as it were, in a more elevated sphere than other men, he was not subject to have his understanding darkened by clouds, and jaundiced by the noxious mediums of partiality, bigotry, and enthusiasm; he has, therefore, been as successful in refuting the false and suborned evidences of Christianity, as in asserting and illustrating the true. Thus he has contributed more than all the mistaken zeal and pious frauds of a thousand saints and pontiffs could have done to the rendering it that simple, venerable, attractive and engaging structure which God and Jesus intended it. It is no longer obscured by imposture, and disfigured by the false props and buttresses that were brought to support it."

This is but a summary of what Lardner did, and of what he was; and when it is recollected that not a few of his works were published at a considerable loss, it may be justly said of him, that he did good, "expecting nothing again;" his delight was to be spent in the service of his Lord. And can we believe, in the absence of all evidence to the contrary, that the closing hours of this faithful servant of Christ, were not cheered and consoled by the sure and steadfast hope of a happy immortality?—Can we believe that no recompense awaits him in the resurrection of the just?

Dr. Abraham Rees, the well-known Editor of the *New Cyclopædia*, after an active, useful, and happy life, extended beyond the common term of human existence, having attained to his eighty-second year, was favoured with a departure hence as natural, easy, serene, and christian, as could be desired by mortal being. "Our departed friend," says Mr. Aspland, who preached his funeral sermon, "was equally anxious to secure in his religious system the supreme glory of God the Almighty Father, and to magnify the work, exalt the mediation, and honour the charracter of the Saviour. * * * His heart was always right. His Christian principles never forsook him; they had been the guide of his youth, and the distinction of his mature life, and they were the stay of his old age. His trust was fixed on the mercy of God through Christ, and he was not afraid to die. The expression of his eyes and the posture of his hands, in his last moments, denoted that his mind was engaged in devotion after his tongue had ceased to perform its office. He sunk gradually into his last sleep, and the tenor of his life emboldens me to say that *he died in the Lord.*"

The Reverend Thomas Belsham, died November 11th, 1829, twenty-one years after the Rev. Theophilus Lindsey, and was buried, by their previous mutual agreement, in the same vault, at Bunhill Fields. As regards the intimate relation in which he stood to the latter pious confessor in the cause of Christian truth, he is described in the words of one who highly cherished his memory as his friend, his successor in the pastoral office, his fellow-labourer in the cause of divine truth, and his affectionate biographer. Amiable and venerable were they in their lives, and, agreeably to their mutual wishes and pledges, in death

they are not divided. And we are told by the same able delineator of his mind and character, his intimate and faithful friend (the late Mr. Aspland), that there was nothing in the time or manner of his death to produce consternation and terror, or to excite that bitterest grief which refuses to be comforted. He came to the grave full of days. His end was peaceful, and a release, in short, from growing infirmities. He died as he had lived, cherishing the blessed hope of immortality. Few persons had studied the evidences of the gospel more, or were more familiar with the pages of the New Covenant; and none, perhaps, have entertained a more steady, rational faith in the glorious doctrine of eternal life. He acknowledged with gratitude, as he looked back upon the way in which the Lord his God had led him, that he had passed a happy life; not wholly exempt, indeed, from care and trouble, but still abounding in goodness and mercy. It was always in his heart to glorify his Maker, and to serve his fellow-creatures; and, now that his course is finished, we who survive may take comfort from the knowledge that he was an active and useful servant of Christ, and rejoice in the expectation that he will hereafter be welcomed with *Well done! good and faithful servant!* from the lips of his heavenly Master.

Of the illustrious Dr. Channing, who has but recently gone to his reward, it behoves us to say a few words before we close this section of our article. It may be truly said of the works of this highly-gifted writer and Christian minister, that while they are calculated to exercise an influence on the world at large, and to win for the cause in which he wrote, a sympathy and admiration, more extensive and beneficial than perhaps those of any of his predecessors or even contemporaries, the Unitarian body have special reason "to cherish his memory with gratitude, for his skilful and noble treatment of the evidences and doctrines of their faith, and his powerful recommendation of both by strength of argument, by felicity of illustration, and by warm, pure, generous, and fervent emotion." His ardent and glowing piety, indications of which abound in every page of his writings; his high estimate of the character and the religion of Christ; his lucid and convincing representations of the harmony subsisting between reason and religion, between Christianity and human

nature; and, above all, his glorious views of that nature and its worth, inasmuch as these peculiar characteristics of his splendid genius have imparted an interest to Unitarian views previously unfelt, and inspired a confidence in their worth and power heretofore unrecognized, must entitle the name of Channing to the deepest reverence of his contemporaries and to the enduring homage of an enlightened and grateful posterity.

What, then, it may be asked, was the closing scene of the life of this distinguished individual? We are not in possession of any account of his last moments; and shall therefore conclude this brief notice by an extract from an able and truly eloquent *Tribute to the Memory of Dr. Channing*, being a *Discourse Preached on the occasion of his Death* by Mr. Tagart., "As a worthy conclusion of his labours," says Mr. T., "Dr. Channing delivered on the first of August, (but a short time before his death) an address on the Anniversary of Emancipation in the British West Indies. It was his dying legacy to his country to hold up to its admiration and imitation the example of England in this holy and Christian work. Very affecting and solemn are his tones. Beautiful and earnest are his rejoicings for the triumphs which religion and humanity have already achieved, and his hopes and anticipations of what they would still further accomplish for the oppressed and degraded among mankind. *His words derive a sanctity from the knowledge that they are his last*; and they cannot but have a great effect upon his country. 'I have turned aside,' he says 'to speak of the great stain on our country, which makes us the bye-word and scorn of the nations; but I do not despair. Mighty powers are at work in the world. Who can stay them? God's word has gone forth and 'it cannot return to him void.' A new comprehension of the Christian spirit, a new reverence for humanity, a new feeling of brotherhood and of all men's relation to the common Father—this is among the signs of our times. We see it; do we not feel it? Before this, all oppressions are to fall. Society, silently pervaded by this, is to change its aspect of universal warfare for peace. The power of selfishness, all grasping and seemingly invincible, is to yield to this divine energy. The song of angels, 'On Earth Peace,' will not always sound as fiction. O come, thou kingdom of Heaven, for which

we daily pray! Come, Friend and Saviour of the race, who didst shed thy blood on the cross to reconcile man to man, and earth to Heaven! Come, ye predicted ages of righteousness and love, for which the faithful have so long yearned! Come, Father Almighty, and crown with thine omnipotence the humble strivings of thy children to subvert oppression and wrong, to spread light and freedom, peace and joy, the truth and spirit of thy Son, through the whole earth!"

We have now to deplore the loss to the Unitarian Church of our late estimable friend, the Rev. Robert Aspland. In presenting to the readers of this publication a few remarks on his pastoral and literary character, it is by no means our intention to give any thing like a full or complete portraiture of his worth, his talents, or his usefulness—we leave this to some abler and more experienced pen; but we have thought that a brief notice of his religious and intellectual qualities, at the present moment, might be beneficial as well as interesting. In the early part of his life, Mr. Aspland seceded, we believe, from Calvinistic to Unitarian views of Christianity, and was ordained about forty-five years ago as pastor of the Unitarian Congregation at Newport in the Isle of Wight. Eventually, on the removal of Mr. Belsham from Hackney, to Essex-street, Mr. Aspland was invited by the Congregation of the former place to become his successor; and, consequently, he had continued to reside among, and to officiate till within a short period of his death, to the same respectable and affectionate Congregation for the space of forty years. As a pastor he was most highly respected and esteemed, not only for the sterling excellence of his discourses, composed in a strain of manly eloquence, and in a truly evangelical spirit, and calculated to diffuse sound views of theology with Christian morality; but, also, for his uniform kindness of heart and urbanity of manners. And what contributed still more to the esteem in which he was held, was his extensive usefulness: from the conspicuous station he held in the Unitarian Church, his character, and his talents, he was naturally connected for a very long period with the various Dissenting Charities and Trusts established in the metropolis, and with some of them officially. His regularity, punctuality, sagacity and activity, procured for him the

confidence of his numerous associates in these establishments, and, what might be still more valuable, the gratitude of many Dissenting Ministers whom by means of these connexions he was enabled to serve. He bore a very active part in the establishment of that highly useful institution, the Unitarian fund, of which he was the indefatigable secrectary until ill-health compelled his retirement from the office. During his residence at Hackney he originated two periodicals, the "Monthly Repository," and the "Christian Reformer," the latter of which he continued to edit till within a few years of his decease. Both are indeed the "repositories" of many papers written by himself, of deep learning, sound Christian theology, and masterly argument.

His manner in the pulpit was characterised by earnestness, feeling, and dignity. He practised no arts in preaching; on the contrary, he was an utter enemy to all affectation, and especially in the Christian Minister. His sound and practical, and Scriptural ministrations were enforced with a simplicity, clearness, and warmth, peculiarly his own, which reached the heart of his auditory, and which will not be readily forgotten by those who had the happiness of attending upon his ministry.

Of Mr. Aspland, as a man, a friend and neighbour, it has already been very justly said (making some allowance for infirmities from which indeed none are wholly exempt) that he was "hearty, courteous, generous, plain-spoken, self-relying, ready to employ his talents and influence to promote the welfare of any one he thought worthy of them; and uniting with these qualities a detestation of cant and pretension of all sorts, that was equalled only by his love of truth and goodness, wherever they appeared in a genuine form." While no man was possessed of a keener insight into what constitutes the noble and generous and estimable in the true Christian character, as well as the genuine and requisite indications of these qualities, but few could be more solicitous to observe them in their own practice; few discovered or more cordially appreciated them in others; and perhaps none ever more severely exacted them in all who aspired to his esteem and friendship. "Meanness, insincerity, falsehood, and a narrow-spirit were his abhorrence, as alike degrading to the man and disgracing to the Christian."

One main feature in the character of our departed friend, was a repugnance to outward show and glitter. He may be said to have been a "true-born Englishman," considered in the healthiest periods of our history—a man of simplicity, earnestness, and energy, as well in his actions as in his writings. We are not the panegyrists of the late Mr. Aspland, for we are aware that he was not without his defects; but we have an opinion with regard to his literary labours in particular, which we shall fearlessly state. These consisted principally in sermons and theological disquisitions, and other papers of a miscellaneously literary character inserted in the two periodicals above referred to. These evince the qualities of his mind, as that of a cautious but ardent inquirer after Christian truth, a fearless assertor of his opinion, yet open to conviction—in thought, sober and circumspect; in reasoning, accurate and logical. His writings are distinguished by clearness and vigour of conception and perspicuity of style. He was not, apparently, ambitious of ornament in his compositions, but there are passages in his pulpit discourses which may be cited as examples of peculiar felicity of diction, and of a chaste but fervid imagination. In general, his sermons appear to have been constructed according to the legitimate rules laid down by Dr. Blair, and similar classical writers on the *belles lettres;* for this we do not blame, but rather admire, them; and though it could hardly be expected but that the great number that have been published should vary in their respective degrees of force, clearness, and logical argumentation, there are some, like the one preached on the occasion of the death of the late Mrs. Rowe, of Bristol, containing passages, we will venture to say, not surpassed, in stirring pulpit eloquence, by Massillon or Bossuet. Take, for example, the following extract from the discourse just mentioned, on Heaven and its joys:—

"The descriptions of the world to come by the sacred writers are altogether general, and consist of the images of those things that are here most intimately associated with joy and glory. Heaven is a festival, in which good men will sit down with the most illustrious of their kind, and enjoy communion with their Saviour, and, through him, with the Father of all. It is a kingdom in which

they will reign for ever, on thrones that cannot be shaken, and with crowns that shall not fade away. It is a state of light, of safety, purity, activity, and joy—in which they shall shine as the sun. It is a condition of perfect life, unalloyed satisfaction and pleasure. It is a temple not made with hands, and eternal, the gates of which are never shut, and in which all the righteous minister as priests before God, singing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and of the Lamb, and uniting in their hallelujahs with all the wise and good from every climate and every age, and every dispensation of faith and knowledge. It is a holy city, whose foundations are the rock of ages, whose builder and maker is God. It is a paradise, a garden of peace and pleasure, where grows the tree of life, bearing ever-varied fruit, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations, and where flows the river of the waters of life, fresh from the everlasting fountain. It is a day without night, created by that Sun which never goes down, nor is obscured by clouds, even the glory of Him who dwelleth from eternity in his own inconceivable splendours."—pp. 10, 11.

And again, in the same discourse:—

"Our highest interests (I speak to Christians, but let men of the world hear!) are in that country, whither we are travelling to spend nearly the whole of our existence. As our treasures are there, thither let our hearts ascend. Let us rise above the world that is perishing. For what is the world? It is not merely this material globe. There would be no beauty or grandeur here but for our associations of ideas, and these are all formed upon the model of human society. To *behold the face of man no more upon the earth,* is to take away from the earth all that is of value, or that can minister delight. Suppose this the last generation of the human race, and one of us to be the single survivor of all his species: would not this be the most unhappy of beings? Would not the world lose its wonted charms, and, instead of beauty, present deformity—instead of sublimity, dreariness and horror? The world, then, is formed by human beings: but not by the generations gone by; for, to the eye of sense, what are they but dust and ashes? The present living inhabitants of the globe are the world; but they die daily, and presently will all have been gathered to their fathers. What,

therefore, of certainty and satisfaction is there in the world? None; but as we carry ourselves forward to that state where alone life, and where alone society can be truly enjoyed; that state where hunger and thirst shall be no more known, where there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, where *God shall wipe away all tears from all eyes*, and where the unclouded light of the Divine love shall create the joy, and call forth the praises of the multitude that no man can number, through ages that shall revolve their never-ending round."—pp. 18, 19.

For ourselves, we hesitate not to say, that for their vigorous simplicity, their plain evangelical tone, their practical good sense, the sermons of Mr. Aspland will continue to be read when not a few of those of his contemporaries (his Unitarian brethren not excepted) of more ambitious pretensions, which aim at a more profound and recondite Christian philosophy, or a more imaginative brilliancy, may be disregarded or forgotten.

His coeval and friend, Mr. Fullagar, informs us,* that the sermon which first brought him into public notice, was entitled, "Divine Judgments on Guilty Nations," delivered on a fast-day, in 1803, a time when the established and dissenting clergy were rivalling each other in offering adulatory incense on the altar of high prerogative. "Mr. Aspland, on the contrary, thought that a fast-day should be a day of national humiliation, and proceeded to state what he deemed our national sins: there were our eagerness for war, the alliance of the Christian religion with the civil power, our treacherous and bloody conquests in the East Indies, our slave ships, the multiplied oaths in our civil and ecclesiastical administration, and our penal laws, like those of Draco, written in blood; the amelioration of some of these evils he lived to see, and to it he contributed his talents and his energies, which were always at the service of any project for the enlargement of the human mind."

Such was the late Rev. Robert Aspland, in the general lineaments of his mind and character. Moreover, it is satisfactory to know, that as he had begun, so he continued to the end of his career. Latterly, indeed, successive attacks of ill-health tended to repress his energies

* See the "Inquirer" for January 17th, 1846.

in the service of the church to which he belonged, and for some years before his death he had been obliged to remain in comparative retirement and inactivity. Consolatory is it, however, to reflect that through all his physical sufferings his mind continued firm and steadfast, fixed on the Rock of Ages. He knew in whom he had believed. To the last he did not neglect in his domestic sphere the requirements of devotional duty. His end was peaceful; and while those who survive have to lament the loss of a Christian minister, whose teachings always ministered to virtue, and to those principles and feelings that make and keep society great and happy, they also derive consolation from the assurance that he descended to the tomb with unswerving confidence in redeeming mercy, and in the joyful hope of a blessed immortality.—Ed.

ILLUSTRATION OF DIFFICULT PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE.

It seems to have been an universal custom, derived from the first fathers of mankind, to describe the world by resemblances of the human body. Hence an *arm* of the sea, the *mouth* of a river, the *foot* of a mountain, the *brow* of a hill, the *face* of a country.

The Scriptures abound with such similitudes: a plain between two prominent hills, is a dwelling between *shoulders;* a bay near the mouth of Jordan is a *tongue;* a mountain is a *head,* of which trees, bushes, and vegetables are the *hair*; a cliff is a *nose,* and the bed of the ocean is the hollow of God's *hand.* Throughout all the East, a spring or fountain, or well-head, is an *eye.* In general the springs and brooks in Palestine may be divided into three classes: the first accidental or providential. Of this kind is Ain-bakkora in the rocky mountain Lehi. Nothing could be more natural than an assimilation of mountains to animals. The Arabians called a high lofty mountain, with expanded sides, Halica, a bird on the wing, whence came Mount Helicon, with all its poetical appendages. The Phœnicians called a huge mountain Thour, an ox, whence came mount Taurus. The Hebrews called one rocky mountain an ass, and the craggy passage

by which it was ascended Lehi, the jaw. In the top of the rock Etam in Simeon, the hero Samson dwelt, and the road to his habitation went through Judah by Lehi. The Philistines, whom he had exasperated, and who watched an opportunity to take him, lodged themselves in a passage called Lehi, or the jaw, a ledge of rugged rocks in the lower part of the mountain. The lands of Simeon had been taken out of the lot of Judah, whose lands lay betwixt Samson and the Philistines, and which had been damaged by their frequent incursions, covenanted with the Philistines to deliver Samson into their hands. When he appeared, coming down Ramat-lehi, or the upper part of the jaw, the Philistines located in the lower part shouted to attack him. The hero, perceiving a pendant projection of the rock (a tooth of the jaw) moist, and supposing water had loosened it, laid hold, and, shivering it off, set it rolling down the steep, which, dislodging other masses as it fell, overwhelmed and killed a great number of men in the narrow pass at the bottom. Samson, transported with joy, exclaimed, alluding to the name of the mountain and the passage, that he had thrown down *heaps* of rock and rubbish *upon heaps* of Philistines, and that *with the jaw bone of an ass* he *had slain a thousand men.* By this exertion he had exhausted his spirits and strength, and in an agony of thirst he cried to Heaven for water. He had not been mistaken in the moisture, for, when he rent the rock, there sprang out of the hollow clift a stream of water, and Samson called it Ain-bakkora, an eye, that looked in mercy upon him, when in distress he prayed for water. From this remarkable spot, a socket in the upper jaw, where Samson broke off the rock, a fountain continued to flow in after ages.

An investigation of Jewish topography, and the taste of the Eastern nations in describing places, very likely would elucidate many parts of the Old Testament, much better than the usual touches of types and systems, and render the most edifying books of antiquity, at the same time, the most entertaining.

Probably Behemoth, that "ate up grass like an ox," that lay among reeds and fens and willows of the brooks, that "drank up a river and moved not, that stared upon Jordan with his eyes, and drew it up into its mouth,"

was no other than the dead sea, the lake Asphaltates. Possibly Leviathan, "by whose neesings a light doth shine; whose eyes are like the eyelids of the morning; out of whose mouth go burning lamps, and sparks of fire leap out, out of whose nostrils goeth smoke as out of a seething pot, or cauldron; whose breath kindleth coals, and a flame goeth out of his mouth," was nothing else than a volcano. Probably, too, the "fish" that swallowed Jonah, was a subterranean river. Supposing *that*, could sceptics laugh at his history? Jonah goes on board a small coasting vessel; the sea was tempestuous, by means of a violent wind. The mariners thought the Deity was angry; Jonah thought so too; he even pretended to know, that for his sake the great tempest was upon them, and he besought them to cast him into the sea, adding, "so shall the sea be calm unto you." The mariners used every effort to put him on shore; not succeeding, they complied with his request, with great reluctance, affording him, most likely, some means of floating, and most earnestly entreating Jehovah, that he would not lay innocent blood to their charge. The Tyrian inhabitants of the coast carried on a fishing trade, and served Jerusalem and other interior parts with fish, and had sluices and ponds for the supply of their trade. Into one of these, a subterranean river, the mouth of which was a *fishery*, a great swell of water carried Jonah, and retiring, left him ashore "at the bottom of the mountains," in a marsh, where "weeds were wrapped about his head;" there, "in the belly of hell" he composed that prayer which is written in the second chapter, and which expresses confidence in God, in a state of apparent despair. The third day, a great swell of water, a messenger of Jehovah, in answer to the prayer of his servant, set Jonah afloat again, carried him out to sea, from the dismal cavern where he had been confined, and a friendly wave threw him on shore. He was the only man that escaped with his life, out of such a grave, and it was with great propriety and beauty that Jesus resembled his resurrection to the return of Jonah to light and life. All this is not impossible. The whole is in agreement with the history. The Hebrew word rendered fish, signifies also a *fishery;* and there is a high probability that subterranean waters fell into the ocean on this

coast: that the inhabitants guarded the mouths of such waters with gratings or sluices to prevent the return of such fish as were carried up the stream by the tide; and, considering the genius of the people, nothing is more likely than that they should give to the stream itself, either for some real, or supposed likeness, the name of a fish—a small stream, the name of a small fish; a large stream, the name of a large fish; for the assimilating of water to fishes, is analogous to the likening of mountains to animals, or parts of the earth to parts of the human body.

ROBERT ROBINSON.

We have much pleasure in presenting our readers with the following letter, extracted from the *Jersey News*, and from the initials we conclude it is by that strenuous and untiring friend of religious freedom, Captain James Gifford, R.N.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEWS.

SIR,—It is probable that many of your readers may take an interest in being made acquainted with the religious opinions of the late Duke of Sussex, justly held in such high estimation by the British nation. It appears to have been the custom of the Duke to mark every passage which he thought worthy of attention, and the following marginal notes in his own hand-writing were found attached to the preface of a work entitled Hay's *Religio Philosophi*, purchased at the sale of the books of his Royal Highness. The marginal notes are placed within brackets—thus [ ].

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Myrtle Cottage. I. G.

"Leave the Gospel with every man—the excellence of its doctrine will defend it." [Good.] "It is to be trusted with the laity as well as with the clergy; for it makes no distinction between them." [Good and true.] "No human authority, though dignified with the name of primitive, can add the least weight to it." [I believe this to be correct.] "It is better defended by appeals to reason than to human authority." [Good.] "'By his stripes we are healed.' Thus it pleased God in the wonderful dispensations of his Providence (having before prepared men by a very general notion of the expiation of sin by sacrifice,) in this instance to make the only man that ever was without sin, to atone for the sins of mankind." [This is the doctrine of atonement.] "Creeds are human compositions, and therefore of no authority; they are no further to be attended to than they are warranted by Scripture, which is the sole rule of faith." [I agree with the author.] "They may be proposed, but cannot be imposed." [Mark.] "Of their agreement with Scripture every man must

judge for himself: he can have no other opinion than his own, others cannot think for him, nor he for them." [This I completely accede to.] "The tenets which principally distinguish the Christian Religion from all others, and of which men could have no idea or conception of by the light of Nature, relate—1st, to the Deity; 2nd, to the union of Christ with the Deity; 3rd, to a resurrection and judgment preceding a future state. As to the first, God, whose nature is incomprehensible, has been pleased to reveal to us that there are three persons in the Godhead: not three distinct qualities or attributes, but three distinct intelligent agents." [This I call at once dogma, and above our comprehension. If they be intelligent agents, they must have free, independent wills of their own, and what becomes, then, of the Unity of Deity?]

"They are often expressly mentioned together in Scripture." [I do not admit this.] The whole tenor of Scripture implies that they are distinct; and the Scriptures would be unintelligible if they are not conceived to be so: and that all nations should conceive them to be so, was the intention of Christ, when he ordered them to be baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. [I doubt.] He is begotten, not made. [In what consists the difference.] That is, he is of the same essence with the Father, from whom he derives his existence; and the expression (begotten) is used to convey that idea to us; for in our conception everything that is begotten is of the same nature with that which begot it, but nothing that is made is of the same nature with that which made it. [This explanation neither satisfies me, nor does it carry conviction to my mind.] The explanation (begotten) is not used to convey any idea of this divine generation, that is known to God alone. Man is ignorant of the manner of his own generation, or that of any animal, or vegetable, and it would be the most blasphemous presumption, in so inconsiderable a creature of the universe to attempt to explain that of the Son of God. [Therefore you ought not to attempt it.] 'It is sufficient for Christians to believe that there are three persons in one Godhead.' [This is the author's opinion, but not so with any reflecting mind, for we cannot be called upon to believe that which we do not understand, and which after all is only handed down to us by tradition.] "If we cannot tell how the soul is united to the body, much less can we tell how the body and soul of Jesus was united to the Deity. I think the clearest explanation that is to be found of this abstruse point, is in the Athanasian Creed, viz.: 'That our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man, God of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and Man of the substance of his mother born in the world. Perfect God and perfect Man of a reasonable soul and human flesh, subsisting equal to his Father, as touching his Godhead, and superior to the Father as touching his Manhood. Who, although he be God and Man, yet he is not two but one Christ. One not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking the Manhood into God. One altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person. For as the reasonable soul

and flesh is one man, so God and Man is one Christ," [Really, this is such a jargon of undigested thought, and such a mixture of inconsistency, that I cannot accept the explanation.] The Athanasian Creed is justly blameable for setting up a human composition as the standard of Salvation, and for inquiring implicit belief of the tenets contained in it under the penalty of damnation. [No human being has the power of damnation, it is horrible to think of it.] "Though the Son is of the same substance or essence, yet he is subordinate to the Father, who is greater. This is expressly said in scripture, and is implied through the whole tenor of it; therefore, when the Athanasian Creed says he is equal to the Father as touching his Godhead, it it must be understood only, that he is equally of the same divine nature, not equal in authority, for He in everything does the will of the Father, not my will, says He, but thine be done." [That in my opinion, sets the question at rest, and which ought no more to be discussed in this world.] "The expressions, therefore, in the Athanasian Creed, that none of the persons is before or after the other, none greater or less than the other, but their glory equal is scarcely reconcilable with Scripture; or to reconcile it must be understood with great limitations." [I for one do conscientiously think that the less we trouble ourselves about Creeds, and more especially with that denominated the Athanasian Creed, the better for us.]

FREDERICK DOUGLASS, THE FUGITIVE SLAVE.

But little is yet known in this country respecting this remarkable man. A few years ago he was suffering under the horrors of hopeless slavery, in Maryland, United States. Happily for him, and probably for his suffering fellow-slaves, he escaped from his cruel bondage to the Free States of America, where he remained in obscurity for a year or two, working at any employment he could procure, exposed only to the contempt and indignity with which *independent* and republican America, even in its *free* States, treats that portion of its population, however well educated and refined they may be, whose misfortune it is to have any colour in their skin. After a time, on a casual attendance upon an Anti-slavery meeting, Douglass ventured to make himself known to some members of an Abolition Society. The abolitionists found him to be a young man of unusual ability, of sound judgment, serious, of excellent character, and with a degree of cultivation of mind quite extraordinary for the opportunities he had while in the slave state, where teaching slaves to read and even giving them Bibles, subject the offenders to severe penalties! The American Anti-Slavery Society having ascertained that, in addittion to the dependence that could be placed upon all of Frederick Douglass's statements, he had a remarkable facility of expressing himself with fluency, and correctness, employed him as a lecturer upon slavery, the evils of which he was able to expose from per-

sonal experience. His lectures occasioned much excitement in the free states, and much indignation when his statements had gone southward, in the slave states from whence he had escaped. Doubts having been circulated as to the truth of the apalling revelations he made, he resolved to publish a narrative of his life, giving the names of the masters under whom he lived, and dates and events which would at once prove the correctness of his account, and suppressing only some names and circumstances connected with his escape, which, if known, would have involved some of his benefactors in difficulties, and have diminished the facility of escape of other slaves by similar means. Wendell Phillips, Esq., an eminent barrister of Massachusets, and an active abolitionist, to whom Douglass showed his narative in MS., advised him not to publish it, as it would probaly lead to successful efforts for his being re-taken, and returned to slavery; a fugitive slave not being safe even in the free states, their laws compelling them to give up such runaways if claimed by their owners. Douglass, however, with that courage which has distinguished him throughout his career, printed the narrative, and most rapid was its sale in America. Prudence, however, as well as other powerful motives, decided him upon taking the occasion of the excitement produced by the wide dissemination of his narrative, to leave America for awhile, and visit Great Britain. In accordance with this intention he sailed in the *Cambria,* government steamer, from Boston, last August, in company with Mr. Buffum, a highly respectable man, an abolitionist, and with the Hutchesons, a remarkable family of singers, consisting of four brothers and one sister, who have been performing in Liverpool, and occasioning much interest by the originality of their music and their anti-slavery songs. The party arrived in Liverpool, August 28th, and Douglass immediately repaired to Dublin, where, as well as in Cork and at Belfast (where he at present is), he has been lecturing to thronged assemblies.

The papers contained an account of a fracas on board the *Cambria* when Douglass came to England. The passengers having ascertained what a remarkable man they had with them, expressed a desire to hear him give some history of himself and of slavery, and the captain saw no reason for objecting to their wishes. Notice having been given of what was to take place, that the passengers might attend or absent themselves as they wished, Douglass began to speak, but he had not proceeded far, before he was interrupted by two American gentlemen from the slave states, accusing him of falsehood. Douglass, to prove his statements, began to read the laws of the slave states; the Americans, however, would not allow him to proceed, and threatened to throw him overboard. An Irish gentleman assured them that any attempt at violence would be a dangerous expedient for their own safety. The disturbance rose so high, that Captain Judkins was at length compelled to declare he would put in irons any one who ventured upon an act of aggression. The abolitionists in Massacusets have been voting resolutions of thanks to Captain

Judkins for his manliness on the occasion, and the papers in the interest of the slaveholders abuse him, and threaten him with no more American passengers for allowing their nation to be insulted.

Douglass's lectures are said to be very eloquent. He is now finishing some at Belfast, where the chapels of the Wesleyan Methodists, Independents, and Unitarians have been thrown open to him. His next visit will be to Glasgow, and he will probably come to Bristol (an invitation from which place he has accepted) in the spring.—*Bristol Paper.*

ENTERTAINMENT TO MR. DOUGLASS, BELFAST.

On Tuesday morning, Mr. Douglass, who had been lecturing here for some time past, on the subject of American Slavery, was entertained at a public breakfast in the large room of the Commercial Buildings. The company, composed of upwards of two hundred gentlemen, was presided over by Mr. Sharman Crawford. Eloquent addresses were delivered by the chairman, the Rev. Mr. Nelson, Mr. Douglass, and others; and, during the proceedings, Mr. Nelson, in the name of the Anti-Slavery Society, presented their respected guest with a richly-bound copy of the Bible, as a small token of their affection and regard for his services.

POETRY.

ANTICIPATIONS OF DEATH.

CHRISTIAN! when around thy head
  Clouds of woe are darkly spread,
Then amidst thy gathering fears,
  Useless mortal aid appears,
Humbly as thou kneel'st imploring,
  Fearful prayers for mercy pouring,—
Faint not, though the answer fail,
  Though thy tears should nought avail;
Though thy cherished joys be fled,
  Still, let faith lift up thy head;
Ever be thy prayer the same,
"Father, glorify thy name!

For this cause, perchance His power
  Brings thee to this dreaded hour,
That, through sorrow, thou may'st prove
  All the treasures of His love,
And through patience to endure
  Make thine own election sure.

Brighter burns the Christian's light,
  When around him all is night.
Know, the Merciful surveys thee,
  Doubt thou not that He will raise thee.
When the appointed time is past,
He will give thee peace at last.

Plead thou not thy burden's weight,
  For thy strength is made too great.
God his own appointment knoweth,
  And the needed aid bestoweth.
In thy suffering, rejoice,
  For thou hearest a Father's voice;
Stern His lessons, but they come
  From His love, to guide thee home.
If it be His holy will,
  Like thy Saviour, be thou still.
Pray, in danger, death, or shame,
"Father glorify thy name!"

Rev. S. G. Bulfinch.

THE PARTITION OF THE EARTH.

(*From the Patrician.*)

[We are indebted for this version of one of Schiller's characteristic pieces to Mr. Lodge, the translator of the "Bride of Messina."]

"Take ye the world;"—thus from his height sublime
  Jove spake to men—"take it—my boon is free;
'Tis marked your heritage through endless time;
  Share it like brethren, lovingly."

Quick hies the busy race, athirst for gain;
  To seek their portion young and old repair;
The tiller seized the meadows and the grain;
  The huntsman tracked the forest lair.

The merchant garners all his varied store;
  The abbot claims the juice of purple hue;
The king has barred the stream and highway o'er,
  And cries—a "tenth—a tenth is due!"

Ah! last of all—too late—each part assigned—
  From some far distant scene the poet came;

No vacant spot his wandering glances find,
  No soil but owns a master's name.

"Oh woe is me! for all thy gifts abound,
  And portionless thou leav'st thy faithful son."
Thus while his loud laments to Heaven resound,
  He fell before the eternal throne.

"If in the land of dreams, and Fancy's reign,
  Fondly thou lingerest, then, reproach not me;
Were wert thou, bard, when every share was ta'en?"
  "I was," the poet cried—"with thee!"

"My ravished eye thy glorious face surveyed;
  My rapt ear drank the music of the skies;
Forgive the soul by ecstasy betrayed,
  That lost earth's dull realities!"

"What shall I do?" cries Jove. "Earth given away;
  The mart, the field, the chase, no more are mine;
Say—wilt thou sojourn in the realms of day?
  Come when thou wilt, a home in Heaven is thine!"

INTELLIGENCE.

OPENING OF A UNITARIAN CHAPEL, NEW YORK.

On the 22d. October, a new chapel was opened at New York, called, "The Church of the Divine Unity," and dedicated to the worship of the One God, the Father. The exterior has a very imposing effect, and the interior is considered as being exceedingly beautiful. The opening prayer was by the Rev. F. A. Farley; the Scriptures were read by the Rev. H. Furness; dedicatory prayer by the Rev. Dr. Kendal; the sermon by the Rev. H. W. Bellowes, by whose congregation the chapel had been built, and which was crowded upon the occasion.

BIRMINGHAM UNITARIAN BROTHERLY SOCIETY.

The annual meeting of the members of this society was held in the Upper Vestry of the New Meeting House, on Sunday, Jan. 4, when reports of the several institutions in connection with the society were laid before the meeting, and the following is an abstract of them:—"Number of pupils in the several Unitarian Sunday Schools in Birmingham—males, 1099; females, 503; total, 1602; who are instructed by 250 teachers. The school

libraries flourish in a most satisfactory manner. Total number of books in all the libraries, 4837, which have been renewed and exchanged during the past year to the extent of 20,260; number of subscribers at a half-penny per week, 600; number of depositors to the several savings' clubs during the year, 807; deposits, £551 4s. 2½d; repayments, £527 7s. 0½d.; increase in the amounts deposited, £156 8s. 8½d.; increase in repayments, £176 15s. 1½d.

The Brotherly Benefit Society, formed in 1798, has 306 members; increase since 1844, 25; and the payments to members in times of sickness is larger than any other society in this town. Subscriptions during the year, £144 0s. 6d.; payments for sickness and funerals, £94 7s. 2d.; being a saving of £49 13s. 4d. on the subscription. The amount received and due for interest on mortgages, £162 17s. 8d.; mak ng a total saving during the year of £212 11s. 0d. The total capital of the society now amounts to £3041 2s. 3½d., £2870 of which is invested in freehold securities. This society is independent of the New Meeting Provident Fund. The Loan Fund, also in connection with all the schools, continues to prosper, and is supported by subscriptions of members at 6d. per quarter. Receipts and payments during the year 1845, are—Subscriptions, £5 16s.; loans repaid, £52 14s. 6d.; amount lent on loans, £49 5s. The total amount of the fund is £157 12s. 7d." These institutions are of great utility to the industrious classes of this borough, and it is gratifying to find their operations are extending.

TAUNTON.

On Tuesday, December 30th, the annual Tea Meeting of the Unitarians was held at Mary-street Chapel; at 5 o clock about two hundred and fifty sat down to the social repast; the body of the chapel was boarded over and formed a large platform; garlands of evergreens wound round the massive pillars formed a neat and appropriate decoration; after tea the company was considerably increased. The Rev. Mr. Montgomery presided, and the audience was addressed at considerable length by that gentleman, and the Rev. Mr. James of Bristol (who unexpectedly joined the party and who was warmly received). The spirit of inquiry now so rife, and the increasing intelligence of the times, were especially alluded to as peculiarly favourable to the increase of Unitarianism. The audience, which numbered many members of other religious denominations, were thanked for their attendance (particularly as Unitarians were a sect everywhere spoken against) and evinced by their close attention, that the devotional and christian sentiments urged by the speakers met a a ready response. In the interval between the addresses, pieces suited to the season were sung by the choir. It is hoped that all separated, profitted as well as pleased with the evening's proceedings. The following institutions are connected with the chapel:—The Sunday School it appears numbers about seventy scholars The Provident Society has thirty-six families of the poor connected with it. The Dorcas Working Society is in active operation; the various garments made by the

ladies belonging to it, being sold at the half price of the material. The Tract Society is also extensively useful, there being one hundred and fifty tracts exchanged weekly through the town, exclusively of such tracts as are distributed amongst the congregation, and many of the members of the chapel have offered their services as tract distributors for the coming year. The Chapel Juvenile Library contains about three hundred and fifty well selected books, and another library exists for the members of the congregation. A Blanket Society for lending blankets during the winter also exists, and is of increasing benefit. During the winter, a Weekly Meeting takes place in the vestry, for the discussion of religious and controversial subjects, and these meetings seem increasingly attractive, about fifty persons usually attending. And a strong feeling is manifested as to the desirableness of establishing a day school, wholly unsectarian in its principles, and of building a room suitable for the schools, and also for meetings of the congregation.

NORWICH—OCTAGON CHAPEL DISTRICT VISITING SOCIETY.

On Friday evening, the 2nd inst., a Social Tea Meeting of the members and friends of this society was held in the spacious girl's school-room, recently erected in connection with this congregation.

After half an hour spent in friendly conversation,

The Rev. Joseph Crompton, minister of the congregation, then took the chair, and, after a few prefatory remarks, called upon Travers Madge to read the report of the secretary, Mrs. Withers Dowson.

The report commenced by stating the establishment of the society in December, 1843, its object being to promote mutual improvement and co-operation in plans of Christian benevolence, and for enlarging their means of usefulness, especially among their poorer brethren. The city is divided into districts; visitors were appointed, and monthly meetings, for business, and for working for the poor, were arranged. The visitors' duty is to visit all who were in any way connected with the congregation, its schools, or other institutions,—to distribute tracts where wished for,—to receive small deposits for the District Provident Society,—to attend especially to any cases of sickness or distress,—and, by every means in their power, to cultivate a spirit of Christian brotherhood. The report then spoke of the happy effects produced by the society. "The sick have been watched over, the sorrowing comforted, and the erring brought back to better ways, and the blessed feeling of the great brotherhood of man, with all its sweet and holy charities, spread over our communion. There are twenty districts containing above five hundred members of families, each of which has been visited. A great number of tracts, and useful and interesting books, have been circulated; help has been given to those in sickness, or any other distress; a considerable sum of money has been saved, which the depositors are now receiving back with a bonus of 1d. for every shilling. Linen has been lent out to many families in illness, and clothes

given to them in cases of particular distress. The evening monthly meetings at which the different articles of clothing and linen have been made, have given great and increasing pleasure and satisfaction. These meetings are held at the secretary's house, and Mr. Crompton reads some interesting book during the evening. Many attend who have not time and opportunity to give their help in any other way, and thus all work together for good." The report concluded with an appeal for help, by small annual contributions, but especially by active co-operation, and a suggestion as to the establishment of a domestic mission.

Mr. Crompton then rose, and, in an admirable address, noticed the several topics of the report, dwelling, first, on the happiness which all appeared to feel in the evening's enjoyments, and enforcing, with truthful earnestness, the necessity and advantages of such a society. He also took up the subject of a domestic mission, and expressed a hope, that at no very distant period they would be able to establish one in Norwich.

J. W. Dowson urged the immediate application of such means as were already possessed towards the formation of a domestic mission. He adverted to the City Mission, already established for several years in Norwich, attended with very considerable success, yet which, from conscientious motives, declined our co-operation, as not being *evangelical* Christians. The secretary of that mission had, however, warmly expressed his approbation of our desire to co-operate with them, and his earnest hope that we might succeed in any parallel operations of our own.

A Christmas carol was here introduced and sung with great animation and effect.

Travers Madge seconded the proposal of immediately setting about the work of a domestic mission, the very work in which Christ himself was engaged while on earth, and the noblest work in which any Christian can engage. He maintained that all are, or should be, ministers of Christ; that the visitors of this society were especially so, in their labours of love as "sisters of charity;" and that all should work together in the Christian ministry. There has been too much *talk* already about Unitarians being Christians or not; they must prove it by their *works*, if they would have others believe it. This animated address was responded to by all present, and failed not to give a tone to the meeting.

Chas. L. Corkran, who had recently arrived from London to settle in that city, was equally warm and energetic. He said it was quite impossible to *talk* down the prejudices of others; we must *love* them down, and *live* them down; and how so effectually as by employing our talents, opportunities and best energies in such labours as were necessary to prepare the way for and maintain a Christian domestic mission.

J. M. Wade, a former teacher, and now a visitor from London, responded to the call of the chairman with a readiness and warmth which summed up the enthusiasm of the evening. He invoked the blessing of God on their proceedings, and only wished that he could partake in them as he hoped to do elsewhere.

The assembly then rose, and sung, with one heart and voice, the dismissal hymn, after which,

Mr. Crompton uttered a few words of fervent prayer and blessing, which made every heart glow with gratitude and love.

Many who were present have declared that they never before spent so perfectly delightful and satisfactory an evening; and a general impression prevailed that if a similar meeting should be held again, the civic hall would not be too large for the assembly, which was now restricted, for want of room, to those above sixteen years of age.—*Abridged from "the Inquirer."*

LONDON DOMESTIC MISSION.

A very pleasing celebration of the season was given by the committee of the London Domestic Mission Society, to the children of the schools belonging to that institution, in the Temperance Hall, Milton-street, City, on Christmas eve. This society was formed, and is principally supported, by the Unitarians in and near London. Its object and aim is to promote a good understanding between the different classes of society so widely separated, and to show the humbler class that their richer brethren care for them, and enter into their feelings, their difficulties, and their distresses, and this not as much by almsgiving as by their intercourse and friendly communications, advice, and sympathy, by manifesting an interest in their circumstances and views, encouraging them to hope and persevere, and imparting to them the means of it in various ways—endeavouring, in short, to act as friends, administering succour and relief occasionally. The society maintains two missionaries, who go about in their districts, visiting and communicating with the inhabitants who are willing to receive them; and it is gratifying to state they generally find a welcome. Two stations are connected with the society, at which regular religious services are conducted on Sundays: one is situate in Spicer-street, Spitalfields, of which the Rev. R. K. Philp is the missionary: a spacious building has been erected, which serves the two purposes of school-room and chapel. The other is in Half-Moon-alley, Whitecross-street, Cripplegate, of which the Rev. William Vidler is the missionary: but here the efforts of Mr. Vidler are cramped for want of more room. The friends to the mission are, however, raising a fund to obviate this difficulty, by erecting a commodious building, as soon as an eligible site can be procured, so that the objects contemplated may be more fully carried out. It is our earnest hope and desire that it will be done speedily, feeling convinced that the hands of the missionary will be strengthened, and the cause of Christian benevolence greatly increased.

It is part also of the institution to give occasional treats to the children of the schools, in the summer, by excursions into the country; and in the winter, by evening meetings—singing, exhibition of the magic lanthorn, and various other amusements. In the afternoon of Christmas-eve as many as 400 children assembled with their teachers and many friends: all who saw their happy

little faces, and heard their shoutings, need have no further proof of their enjoyment, which was augmented by an exhibition of "The Christmas Tree, or Tree of Love," which was erected on the platform in the hall.

Christmas-eve is usually celebrated in this way in Germany, and on the Continent. In almost every family this pleasing object is set up, having the resemblance of a growing tree, laden with a profusion of fruit and flowers; and upon its branches each

CHRISTMAS TREE.

member of the family suspends the presents intended for those towards whom they have the greatest esteem and affection, and when exhibited, the tokens of love are claimed by the donors, and given with compliments to their friends. This pleasing custom is becoming more general in this country, and was well carried out by the children of the Mission, who hung oranges and fruit, besides a great number of other presents, on their Christmas tree, the whole being brilliantly illuminated with candles. The presents were successively given to the children by the guardians of the tree, and they presented them to their friends and school-fellows. We were much pleased to notice that the first present was made by a little girl to the venerable senior missionary, the Rev. R. K. Philp, who was the president of the festival. Before

and after its exhibition, the magic lanthorn was shown, and the amusements of the evening were enlivened by some pleasing singing, suitable to the occasion: and thus terminated this simple and interesting celebration of Christmas-eve, 1845.

Before and after the exhibition of the Tree, the magic lantern was shown; and the amusements were enlivened by some pleasing singing. Then the children were addressed by the Missionaries; by Mr. W. Wansey, the Treasurer of the Society; by Dr. Bateman, the Secretary; and by several of the Teachers of the different Schools. The fruit was then taken from the Tree, and distributed amongst the delighted children; and thus terminated this simple celebration of Christmas Eve in Cripplegate."

ANNUAL SCHOOL FESTIVALS, CHICHESTER.

Two excellent Sermons were delivered by the Rev. H. Hawkes, of Portsmouth, on Sunday the 21st of December, in aid of the funds of the Sunday School, in connection with Biffin's Lane Chapel, and which were responded to by a liberal collection. The importance of early training the minds of the young in the pure truths of the Gospel was ably enforced. In the afternoon the chidren belonging to the school were examined as to their proficiency, according to annual custom, and gave great satisfaction to all present, after which prizes for improvement and general good conduct were distributed among them. Appropriate addresses in support of the projects of the meeting were delivered by several leading members of the congregation, and all seemed delighted with the present and future prospects of the school, and with the day's proceedings.

LEICESTER.

The annual Tea Meeting of the schools connected with the Unitarians of this town, was held at the Wellington Rooms, on Monday, December 29th. About three hundred and fifty children, besides their parents, sat down to tea, and before the meeting finished there could not have been less than seven hundred persons present, including the Rev. C. Holland, of Loughborough, J. Whetstone, Esq., the Messrs. Biggs and ladies, W. Stone, Esq., the Town Clerk, and family, H. Stokes, Esq., and nephew; and a number of the most respectable families of the Town and County. Pleasing and suitable addresses were delivered by the Revs. Bery, Holland, and Jones, J. Whetstone, Esq., &c., &c., for the amusement of the children; the magic lanthorn was introduced, with which they were highly delighted. We look upon these meetings with great pleasure, feeling convinced they must do good by bringing all into union with each other.

HALIFAX.

The Sunday School Tea Party in connection with the Unitarians of this town, was held on the 1st. January; upwards of one hundred and sixty scholars, teachers, and friends were present. The room was decorated with evergreens; and the Tea was under the

management of the female teachers. The Rev. W. Turner was called to the chair, who in an animated and touching address called upon all present to aid in the work of giving religious improvement to the young; the report was read in a very able manner by Mr. Baines. Addresses were delivered by Mr. T. Rawlings, Mr. Stancliffe, Mr. Tossard, Mr. Wandsworth, &c., &c. Several anthems were sung by the chapel choir, and a vote of thanks was given to Mr. Turner for his valuable services. The meeting then joined in a prayer of thanksgiving to the Throne of the Heavenly Grace, and separated highly delighted.

SHEPTON MALLET.

On Tuesday, January 6th, the Unitarian Congregation of this town, held their annual Tea Meeting; about two hundred sat down to the social repast. Animated and interesting speeches were delivered by Mr. Wasen, Mr. Norton, and the Rev. H. Solly. The choir sang some beautiful pieces of sacred music, which added much to the evening's gratifications.

SELECTIONS.

The legitimate and perfect action of the religious sentiment takes place when it exists in harmonious combination with reason, conscience, and affection. Then it is not hatred, and not fear, but love before God. It produces the most beautiful development of human nature; the golden age, the fairest Eden of life; the kingdom of Heaven. The demands it makes are to keep the law which God has written on the heart—to be good and to do good; to love man, to love God. It may use forms, prayers, dogmas, ceremonies, priests, temples, sabbaths, festivals, and fasts; yes, sacrifices, if it will, as means, not ends; symbols of a sentiment, not substitutes for it. Its substance is love of God; its form love of man: its temple a pure heart; its sacrifice a divine life. The end it purposes is, to reunite man to God, till he thinks God's thought, which is truth; feels God's feeling, which is love; wills God's will, which is the eternal right; thus finding God in the sense wherein he is not far from every one of us; becoming one with him, and so partaking the divine nature.—*Theodore Parker.*

Every individual should bear in mind that he is sent into this world to act a part in it; and though one may have a more splendid and another a more obscure part assigned hin, yet the actor of each is as equally responsible.—*Hannah Moore.*

MARRIAGES.

On the 13th December, at the Unitarian Chapel, Shepton Mallet, by the Rev. H. Soley, Wm. eldest son of William Cooper, Esq., of Bowlish, to Sarah Martha, second daughter of Saml. Bromhead, Esq., of Bristol.

On the 6th, at the Old Meeting House, Birmingham, by the Rev. Hugh Hutton, M.A., Mr. Jacob Coley Ashcroft, of Balsall Heath, to Eliza, only daughter of Mr. Isaac Horton, of Lower Hurst-street, in this town.

On the 5th January, at the Unitarian Chapel, Bridgwater, by the Rev. R. L. Carpenter, B.A., Mr. Richard Stoneman, to Miss Anna Moore.

On the 9th, at the Unitarian Chapel, Bridport, by the Rev. G. E. Squire, Mr. Wm. Matterface, of Allington, to Miss Amelia Hodder, of Bridport.

On the 1st ult., at the Unitarian Chapel, Taunton, by the Rev. R. M. Montgomery, the Rev. Wm. Arthur Jones, M.A., of Northampton, to Margaret, second daughter of the late Rev. William Blake, of Crewkerne, Somerset.

On the 13th December, at the Unitarian Chapel, Shepton Mallet, Edmund, youngest son of Mr. Cooper, to Anne Haidee, eldest daughter of Mr. Bromhead.

OBITUARY.

It is with feelings of sincere regret that we record the death of the Rev. Robert Aspland, nearly forty years the minister of the Unitarian Congregation assembling at the New Gravel Pit Chapel, Hackney. This eminently useful minister ended his mortal pilgrimage early on Tuesday morning, Dec. 30th, 1845, at his residence, the Grove, Hackney. On Tuesday, Jan. 6th his remains were interred in a vault erected on a spot selected by himself, in the burial ground of the New Gravel Pit Chapel, Hackney, of which he had been Pastor forty years. A number of carriages and about two hundred members of the congregation followed the mourning coaches, containing Mr. Aspland's numerous family and some distinguished Dissenting Ministers. The children connected with the school appeared in mourning armlets. The funeral service was conducted by Dr. Thomas Rees, who delivered an address, in which he drew a strong portraiture of the deceased's character, and descanted with peculiar effect upon his exertions in the cause of civil and religious liberty. Dr. Rees stated that the reverend deceaseds high character had brought him into intimate connexion with many of the eminent statesmen of his time, and that the Test and Corporation Act Repeal, the passing of the Dissenting Marriage Act, and other liberal measures, were owing in no small degree to his exertions. At the close of the address, the body, preceded by Dr. Rees and the Rev. T. Madge and Dr. Hutton, was consigned to the earth. Upon no occasion since the death of the venerable Archdeacon Watson, have the inhabitants of Hackney evinced so much respect to a deceased parishioner—many of the shops being closed, and a large concourse of persons of all religious and political views joining in the mournful procession. On the following Sunday, funeral sermons were preached at the New Gravel Pit Chapel, Hackney, in the morning, by the Rev. T. Madge, and in the evening, by the Rev. Dr. Hutton; both services were attended by crowded congregations.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We feel greatly obliged to our numerous Correspondents for their good wishes and communications, some of which we are compelled to keep back until next month.

We are sorry to hear from a Correspondent, that our Orthodox Brethren in Ireland have commenced a litigation for the property of the Widows' Fund.

*** Communications for the Editor to be sent to 7, Farringdon Street, London.